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ABSTRACT

A project identified and validated minimal competencies that describe what K-8 classroom teachers actually do in community education. A total of 27 participants from four Phoenix elementary schools, each of which had an active community education program, identified tasks in five areas related to community education. These were program planning, curriculum planning and implementation, instructional organization, community involvement in instruction, and public relations. A subsequent group meeting was held with each of the four groups to refine and approve the lists. Competency statements identified by the four groups were then combined, condensed, and edited. The resulting 44 competency statements were then validated by 66 experienced K-8 teachers. Competencies were divided into high and low priority competencies. Three tables present a listing of competencies according to task area, the validating and ranking of the competencies, and an aggregate ideal profile of the community education competencies for lay school teachers. (A bibliography is included.) (MN)

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TEACHER COMPETENCIES IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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"The successful implementation of community education depends heavily upon the classroom teacher." (Schofield, 1974) As community education expands, the demands for clarification of the role of the classroom teacher in community education will increase. Although teachers may be in a central position to make them ideal implementers of programs, there is a lack of consensus of the role and competencies of the classroom teacher in community education, and teachers have not traditionally been incorporated into the planning and implementation of community education programs. Community education encompasses diverse groups--community members, administrators, teachers, school boards and paraprofessionals. For effective implementation of community education programs, each group must be aware of its role in the process. As the basic propositions of the community education concept are increasingly applied to the day school program, the ability of the teacher to embrace and perform minimal community education competencies will become more important.

RATIONALE

The literature on community education has not dealt in depth with the role or competencies of the classroom teacher in community education. Investigators have begun to identify the role and competencies for administrator (Miller and McCleary, 1979); however, there is no comparative listing of needed competencies for K-8 classroom teachers. The parameters of performance for teachers should be defined so that effective training in community education might be offered to those seeking to enter the teaching profession.

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Teachers have indicated a real need for clarification of their role in the community education process (Schofield, 1974). They may feel threatened and hesitate to become involved if they do not understand their role. Conversely, teachers who do understand their role as an essential one in implementing a successful community education program may be less hesitant about participating fully in the community education program.

As the role of the teacher in community education is clarified, we may see an increase in participation in community education by this largest body of American educators. The impact of this participation could result in even greater increases of successful implementation of community education programs.

The primary objective of this project was to identify minimal competencies that describe what K-8 classroom teachers actually do in community education.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used was developed to identify and validate minimal competencies for specific groups (Miller and McCleary, 1978). This method is based on the earlier work of (Pol, 1976). The methodology consists of identifying major task areas, writing statements of competence and competency indicators, editing and refining the items, and preparing both "ideal" and "real" profiles as validated by practitioners. The literature provides reasonable assurance that this method provides: (1) the structure needed for task forces to describe roles, (2) a high degree of content and construct validity, and (3) an objectivity of item construction so that role description statements could be used as rating scales for performance assessment.

Following is a description of the methodology and results of the first steps in the process of validating competencies for classroom teachers in community education. Information generated relative to the objectives allowed for the identification of the following major task areas for K-8 teachers in community education.

Program Planning,
Curriculum Planning and Implementation,
Instructional Organization,
Community Involvement in Instruction, and
Community Relations.

The 27 participants were randomly selected from four Phoenix elementary schools. Each of the schools selected had an active community education program. During the first round of activity the participants first discussed the concept of community education and were given a model of the concept as described by Minzey, 1972.

Preliminary data regarding community education tasks, competencies, and indicators were then developed using an ideation format.

A subsequent meeting was held with each of the four groups to refine and approve the lists.

The group interviewing procedure allowed for in-depth discussion of the major task areas and subsequent development of competency statements within each task area. Examples of competency statements were suggested for each area. The teachers were encouraged to generate as many statements as necessary to represent each member's point of view, with no statement considered "right" or "best."

RESULTS

The competency statements identified by the four participant groups were then combined, condensed, and edited. The teachers were reminded that the process was a vital first step, not the end product, in the validation of competency statements for classroom teachers involved in community education.

Table I lists the findings of the project. Forty-four competencies were generated by the participants. These forty-four statements fell into six major program areas. Program Planning, Curriculum Planning, Instruction, Community Relations, Community Agencies, and Community Education Programs were included.

Subsequent to this first round of activity the list of forty-four competency statements was validated by two groups of experienced K-8 teachers (Table II). These sixty-six K-8 teachers were first versed in the concept of community education (Minzey, 1972) and were then asked to rate the 44 items as to their importance on a scale from one to five. This information allowed for a rank order of the competencies into an Aggregate Ideal Profile of community education competencies for the classroom teacher (Table III).

By an arbitrary division of the competencies into two categories of High (21 competencies) and Low (23 competencies), a profile is developed of those community education competencies regarded to be most important by the participants. An analysis of the date indicates that the 21 top-randed competencies fell into four of the six major program areas; three were from Program Planning, four from Curriculum Planning, nine from Instruction, and four were from Community Relations.

The first six items in the ranking focused on communicating with parents and identifying student needs. Conversely, the last six items in the low-ranked category (37,10,36,38,32, and 42) focus mainly on contact with groups and organizations outside the school. In fact, in the categories of Community Agencies and Community Education Programs no items appear in the 21 top-ranked competencies.

It appears that with regard to the teachers in the study they see their roles in community education as being largely vested in the task of communicating with parents and the home.

The fact that the teachers viewed contact with agencies outside the school as well as community education programs as a low priority comes as little surprise as we consider their pre-service training experiences.

Implications for pre-service skill development for teachers is significant. Seemingly, it would be advantages for teachers to be more knowledgable regarding the services of community agencies. Not only would the K-8 curriculum be substantially strengthend but also students who show special interests or talents could be refered. Pre-service teacher curriculum designs could more systematically integrate agency experience during the student teaching phase of their preparation and more effectively impact.

Perhaps less isolationism in the curriculum could benefit factors such as the image of the school in the community and even student achievement. Particularly if students and parents saw more relavancy between the curriculum and daily community living.

TABLE I

IDENTIFIED COMPETENCIES IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION
FOR
K-8 TEACHERS

TASK AREAS	COMPETENCIES
1.0 Program Planning	Ability to:
	1.1 comprehend the philosophy and concept of community education
	1.2 assess and identify community needs
	1.3 Identify student's needs (medical, physical, social, health, nutritional, emotional)
	1.4 obtain and review student records to identify needs
	1.5 involve parents and the community in determining curriculum content
2.0 Curriculum Planning	2.1 identify competencies which students need to become effective participants in community and society
	2.2 identify current community issues (safety, social, economic, health)
	2.3 incorporate student competencies into the curriculum
	2.4 incorporate information about career and vocational development into the curriculum
	2.5 incorporate information and experiences regarding community issues into the curriculum
	2.6 incorporate moral values into the curriculum
3.0 Instruction	3.1 identify community resources
	3.2 recruit volunteers
	3.3 screen volunteers

		3.4 train volunteers
		3.5 provide positive motivation for school and educational process
		3.6 provide motivation for future (continuing education)
		3.7 adapt curriculum to serve needs of students and identified community needs
		3.8 enhance pride in school and community
		3.9 utilize community resources in the classroom
		3.10 utilize the community as the classroom
		3.11 plan and conduct field trips
		3.12 encourage and arrange for parents to participate in educational programs at school
4.0	Community Relations	4.1 generate and support positive school-community relationship
		4.2 serve as a liaison between school and community
		4.3 promote the concept of community education
		4.4 communicate with parents
		4.5 provide information to parents as needed
		4.6 report student progress to parents in a meaningful manner
		4.7 use native language of parents in communication (bilingual and/or interpreter, if necessary)
		4.8 communicate with community members
		4.9 prepare materials/communications for dissemination
		4.10 assist parents in the management of school related problems

5.0	Community Agencies	5.1 identify community agencies and services
		5.2 refer students to community agencies
		5.3 contact service agencies
		5.4 interact with community agencies and services
		5.5 follow-up and monitor services provided as needed
6.0	Community Education Programs	6.1 promote community education programs and concepts
		6.2 participate in and support community activities
		6.3 encourage students to participate in community education activities
		6.4 work with PTA and other community school organizations
		6.5 disseminate information regarding community education programs
		6.6 prepare physical classroom for use by community education programs

TABLE II

VALIDATION AND RANKING OF
COMPETENCIES IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION
FOR K-8 TEACHERS

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	3.48	.78
2	3.58	1.01
3	4.72	.45
4	3.37	1.17
5	3.17	1.46
6	4.50	.83
7	3.37	.90
8	4.17	1.07
9	4.10	.93
10	2.86	.99
11	3.55	1.32
12	3.82	.80
13	3.20	1.29
14	3.13	1.35
15	3.17	1.25
16	4.48	.87
17	4.03	1.05
18	4.17	.80
19	4.06	.99
20	4.00	.65
21	3.79	.77
22	3.68	.92
23	3.72	1.03
24	4.00	.92
25	3.10	1.06
26	3.13	.83
27	4.72	.52

TABLE II (continued)

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
28	4.55	.63
29	4.72	.52
30	4.40	.97
31	3.39	.91
32	2.71	1.15
33	3.34	1.00
34	3.24	1.15
35	3.31	1.10
36	2.82	1.13
37	3.00	1.22
38	2.82	1.22
39	3.27	1.06
40	3.34	1.14
41	3.14	.93
42	2.64	1.33

TABLE III

AGGREGATE IDEAL COMMUNITY EDUCATION COMPETENCIES
FOR
DAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

AGGREGATE IDEAL PROFILE

	3	Identify student's needs (medical, physical, social, health, nutritional, emotional
	27-29	Communicate with parents--Report student progress to parents in a meaningful manner
	28	Provide information to parents as needed
	6	Identify competencies which students need to become effective participants in community and society
H	16	Provide positive motivation for school and educational process
I	30	Use native language of parents in communications (bilingual and/or interpreter, if necessary)
G	18	Adapt curriculum to serve needs of students and identified community needs
H	9	Incorporate information about career and vocational development into the curriculum
	19	Enhance pride in school and community
	17	Provide motivation for the future (continuing education)
	20	Utilize community resources in the classroom
	24	Generate and support positive school-community relationships
	12	Identify community resources
	21	Utilize the community as a classroom
	23	Encourage and arrange for parents to participate in educational programs at school

AGGREGATE IDEAL PROFILE (continued)

	22	Plan and conduct field trips
H	2	Assess and identify community needs
I	11	Incorporate moral values into the curriculum
G		
H	1	Comprehend the philosophy and concept of community education

	31	Communicate with community members
	7	Identify current community issues (safety, social, economic, health)
	4	Obtain and review student records to identify needs
	33	Encourage and arrange for parents to participate in educational needs at school
	40	Participate in and support community activities
	35	Refer students to community agencies and services
L	39	Promote community education programs and concepts
	34	Identify community agencies and services
O	13	Recruit volunteers
W	15	Train volunteers
	5	Involve parents and the community in determining curriculum content
	41	Encourage students to participate in community education activities
	26	Promote the concept of community education
	14	Screen volunteers
	25	Serve as a liaison between school and community

AGGREGATE IDEAL PROFILE (continued)

	37	Interact with community agencies and services
	10	Incorporate information and experiences regarding community issues into the curriculum
L		
O	36	Contact service agencies
W	38	Follow-up and monitor services provided as needed
	32	Prepare materials/communications for dissemination
	42	Work with PTA and other community school organizations

SUMMARY

These data could be of interest to any organization concerned with the role of the school and teacher in society. These field-based rankings indicate to us the feeling of teachers as to their roles in community education.

Leaders in both pre-service and in-service settings should be concerned with the emerging role of the teacher in the community and should help move the teacher toward acquiring the essential skills and competencies needed in this increasingly important area.

CONCLUSIONS

These data are at best preliminary, yet if we are to move the concept of community education from its present program manifestation, where it is all too often an "add-on" program which emphasizes Adult Education and Recreation for youth, to a true "process" which affects the entire curriculum, the role of the teacher must be clarified.

Additional studies of the role of the teacher in community education must be conducted before conclusive baseline data may be established. We hope our study is of some help in the subsequent development of pre-service and in-service curriculum for classroom teachers in community education.

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